

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) today voted in favor of H.R. 2419, the Farm, Nutrition, and Bioenergy Act of 2007. Also known as the Farm Bill, H.R. 2419 sets U.S. agriculture policy for the next five years and provides funding for a variety of safety net programs for farmers and ranchers, as well as nutrition, agriculture research, conservation and rural development programs. The legislation passed the House, by a vote of 231 to 191.

"I have generally voted against Farm Bills because they perpetuated a bloated system of handouts to wealthy agribusiness interests," DeFazio explained. "This bill, however, took major strides in reforming farm subsidies, targeting money to working family farmers and ensuring that organic crops and specialty crops so common in Oregon are a priority for the Department of Agriculture."

The Farm Bill included major increases in funding for conservation programs, organic food production, marketing and research, small specialty crops like fruits and vegetables, school nutrition programs, food stamps, rural economic development, renewable energy, and agricultural research. It also limited subsidies to family farmers by prohibiting payments to large corporate farmers with incomes above \$1 million.

DeFazio also noted that the Farm Bill addresses several issues of long-standing interest. "I have been greatly concerned about the recent food safety scares involving foods imported from China and elsewhere that sickened many across this country. This requires country of origin labeling for beef, pork, lamb and goat meat, to help consumers make smart food choices," he explained. "In addition, this legislation expands renewable fuel production needed to promote American energy independence and protect our environment."

Rep. DeFazio also voted for several amendments to the Farm Bill in an effort to further reform subsidies granted to farmers of corn, cotton and other traditional row crops. For example, DeFazio voted for an amendment offered by Rep. Kind (D-WI), Rep. Flake (R-AZ) and fellow Oregonian Rep. Blumenauer that would have reformed these subsidies while increasing funding for nutrition, conservation, organic and specialty crop programs. The amendment was supported by an unusual coalition of environmental groups and conservative think tanks. It would have provided more money to Oregon farmers than the final version of the bill. Unfortunately, that amendment failed by a vote of 309 to 117.

The Senate must now act on the Farm Bill.